(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether State Governments are empowered to set up their own CNG fuel stations;

(d) whether Government are considering to prepare any policy for gas distribution, if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether Government have asked for suggestions from State Governments while formulating such policy; and

(f) if so, the reaction of the State Governments thereto?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (b) As per the information available with Government, the State Governments of Gujarat, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh have issued or are contemplating to issue NoCs/permissions to some parties for setting up City Gas Distribution Projects, including Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) distribution facilities, in different cities.

(c) In response to a Presidential Reference, the Hon'ble Supreme Court have opined on 25.3.2004 that the Union of India has exclusive jurisdiction to legislate on the subject of natural gas. This was also confirmed in the judgment pronounced by the Hon'ble Court while disposing of the linked Writ Petition on' this issue. Thus, the State Governments do not have powers to issue licences for setting up city gas distribution projects.

(d) to (f) Acity gas distribution policy for such projects envisaging, *inter alia,* selection of parties in a transparent and objective manner is under formulation. The State Governments of Gujarat, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh have been informed of the legal position in the matter.

Promotion of bio-diesel

†694. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any scheme to promote the bio-diesel in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) the quantity of the bio-diesel being produced at present alongwith the locations thereof; and

(d) the extent of foreign dependence to be reduced with respect to diesel after the use of bio-diesel in the country?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) A Detailed Project Report (DPR) on the National Mission on Bio-diesel has been submitted by the Ministry of Rural Development to the Planning Commission which, *inter-alia,* envisages a Demonstration Project involving plantation of Jatropha over 4 lakh hectare on degraded forest and non-forest lands.

(c) There is no production of bio-diesel in commercial quantities of much significance in India. As of now, the bio-diesel is being produced and supplied to oil companies for trials in diesel locomotives and roadways buses by two companies, namely, Gujarat Oleo Chemicals Limited, Ankleshwar and Lubrizol India Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai. The production of bio-diesel by these companies is based on the work orders placed on them by the oil companies. There are few Academic and R&D Institutes, e.g., Institute of Technology, Indian Institute of Petroleum, Punjab Agricultural University, Central Salt and Marine Chemicals Research Institute etc. who are producing bio-diesel on a pilot scale and for R&D purposes.

(d) Though we meet a sizeable portion of our crude oil requirements through imports, we are a next exporter of diesel. As such, there is no direct implication of foreign exchange being saved by mixing bio-diesel with diesel. However, by exporting the diesel that could be substituted by bio-diesel, foreign exchange of proportionate value can be earned.

Status of CNG outlets in the country

695. SHRI DARA SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of CNG outlets which have been opened in the country during the 2004-05 and 2005-06, State-wise, till date;

(b) the number of CNG outlets opened particularly in Mumbai and Amritsar, till date; and

(c) what is the time limit for opening CNG outlets in Mumbai and Amritsar?